

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00  
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6372  
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 223

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, UR  
SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST ON ALLEGED LIMITATIONS ON CONTACTS AT  
EMBASSY

REF: STATE 002503

1. RE REFTEL REQUEST FOR EMBASSY GUIDANCE CONCERNING ADVANCE  
APPROVAL PROCEDURES AND ALLEGED LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF EMBOFFS  
AUTHORIZED TO SEE DISSIDENTS AND SOVIET JEWS: THERE IS NO LIM-  
ITATION ON NUMBERS OF EMBASSY OFFICERS AUTHORIZED TO SEE DISSI-  
DENTS AND SOVIET JEWS. CONTACTS AT EMBOFFS' HOMES WITH PROMIN-  
ENT RPT PROMINENT DISSIDENTS AND JEWISH REFUSENIKS (NOT RPT NOT  
OTHER SOVIET JEWS) MUST BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY AMBASSADOR OR  
CHARGE. CONTACTS AT HOMES OF ALL RPT ALL DISSIDENTS AND REFUSE-  
NIKS MUST ALSO BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY AMBASSADOR OR CHARGE.  
IN OTHER WORDS, EMBOFFS MUST HAVE ADVANCE APPROVAL FROM AM-  
BASSADOR OR CHARGE FOR ALL CONTACTS WITH PROMINENT DISSIDENTS  
WHEREVER THEY MAY OCCUR, BUT ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE APPROVAL FOR  
CONTACTS WITH NON-PROMINENT DISSIDENTS AND REFUSENIKS ONLY IF  
CONTACT IS TO OCCUR OUTSIDE OF EMBOFF'S HOMES. THERE IS NO "24  
HOUR ADVANCE NOTICE" REQUIREMENT. NO ADVANCE AUTHORIZATION IS  
REQUIRED FOR CONTACTS WITH ORDINARY SOVIET CITIZENS. THESE CON-  
TACTS ARE IN FACT STRONGLY ENCOURAGED. DEFINITION OF "PROMINENT"  
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IS A MATTER OF EMBOFF'S JUDGEMENT, BUT EMBASSY EXPECTS THAT IN  
BORDERLINE CASES ADVANCE AUTHORIZATION WILL BE REQUESTED.

2. FYI: WITH REGARD TO HOW EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH DISSIDENTS  
AND REFUSENIKS ARE: SUBJECT TO APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS OUTLINED  
IN PARA 1, IT IS EMBASSY POLICY TO INCREASE RATHER THAN RESTRICT  
NUMBER OF EMBOFFS WHO HAVE CONTACTS WITH DISSIDENTS AND REFUSE-

NIKS. HOWEVER, IT IS OVERSTATING THE CASE TO STATE THAT CONTACTS ARE NOW MORE EXTENSIVE THAN EVER, IF BY THAT IS IMPLIED THAT CONTACTS ARE NOW MORE FREQUENT THAN EVER. SOME OF OUR PREVIOUS CONTACTS ARE NOW IN JAIL, WHICH OF COURSE AUTOMATICALLY REDUCES NUMBER OF CONTACTS. ALSO, BULK OF EMBASSY CONTACTS WITH DISSIDENTS AND REFUSENIKS WAS PREVIOUSLY CARRIED OUT BY FORMER EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY PRESEL, WHO DEPARTED POST IN AUGUST, 1977. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE, PRESEL WAS SUBJECT OF HEAVY, NEAR-CONTINUOUS SOVIET HARASSMENT WHICH SEVERELY LIMITED THOSE CONTACTS. PERSONNEL SHORTAGES FOLLOWING EMBASSY FIRE AND DECISION TO REDISTRIBUTE RESPONSIBILITIES SO THAT CONTACTS WOULD BE SPREAD OUT RATHER THAN CONCENTRATED ON ONE PERSON RESULTED IN A SOMEWHAT LOWER FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER AUGUST. FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS HAS SINCE INCREASED TO A LEVEL WHICH EMBASSY BELIEVES IS APPROPRIATE AND ADEQUATE FOR REPORTING PURPOSES. WHILE FREQUENCY REMAINS SOMEWHAT BELOW THAT WHICH OCCURRED PRIOR TO BEGINNING OF SOVIET HARASSMENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST FORMER EMBASSY PRESEL AND BEFORE SERIES OF ARRESTS IN EARLY 1977, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT QUALITY AND VOLUME OF INFORMATION IT RECEIVES FROM DISSIDENT AND REFUSENIK SOURCES IS ADEQUATE.

3. WE ARE AWARE THAT IT HAS BEEN WIDELY ACCEPTED AS FACT WITHIN MOSCOW'S REFUSENIK COMMUNITY THAT USG MADE DELIBERATE DECISION FOLLOWING BEGINNING OF HARASSMENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST PRESEL TO STOP CONTACTS WITH REFUSENIKS. EMBASSY WITH CONTACTS AMONG REFUSENIKS  
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HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO CORRECT THIS MISIMPRESSION, WE BELIEVE WITH SOME SUCCESS.

4. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, AP REPORTED A VARIANT OF THIS STORY ON OCTOBER 29. RESPONDING TO PRESS QUERIES ON NOVEMBER 4 ABOUT AP STORY, AMBASSADOR SAID ON BACKGROUND THAT THERE WERE AMPLE CONTACTS BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND THE DISSIDENT COMMUNITY TO GIVE US A PICTURE OF THEIR CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ATTITUDES. WE HAVE, SAID THE AMBASSADOR, ALWAYS ADAPTED OUR GROUND RULES TO CHANGES IN THE ENVIRONMENT. HE SAID HE HAD ALWAYS FELT THAT IN SOVIET CONTEXT SENIOR OFFICERS SHOULD HAVE "A GOOD HANDLE" ON CONTACTS, WHICH WAS JUST GOOD MANAGERIAL PRACTICE. AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO DELIBERATE REDUCTION IN CONTACTS AND THAT IN FACT MANY MORE OFFICERS HAD CONTACTS WITH DISSIDENTS AND REFUSENIKS THAN WHEN HE ARRIVED. HE CONCLUDED THAT THERE WERE NO GROUNDS FOR ANY ALLEGATIONS ABOUT A REDUCTION IN EMBASSY EFFORTS.

5. RESPONDING TO A JOURNALIST'S STATEMENT THAT PRESEL HAD BEEN SPECIFICALLY DESIGNATED AS THE POINT OF CONTACT WITH DISSIDENTS, AMBASSADOR SAID THAT PRESEL HAD BEEN ONE OF ONLY A FEW OFFICERS WORKING ON THE SUBJECT AND HAD SPENT LOTS OF TIME DOING SO, A POLICY WITH WHICH AMBASSADOR DISAGREED. HE ADDED THAT ALL SECTIONS

WERE NOW INVOLVED IN THE CONTACT PROCEDURE. RESPONDING TO AN IN-  
QUIRY ABOUT WHETHER OFFICERS HAD TO CLEAR THEIR ACTIONS THROUGH  
THE TOP LEVELS OF THE EMBASSY, AMBASSADOR SAID QUOTE I DON'T  
WANT TO GET INTO THE INTERNAL OPERATIONS OF THE EMBASSY, BUT  
JUNIOR OFFICERS WOULD BE WELL-ADVISED TO CONSULT WITH OTHERS IN  
A POST LIKE THIS. UNQUOTE.  
MATLOCK

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